

Microsoft Morgan

By Dave Doroghy



In a past article I wrote that one of my favorite attributes of old Morgans is their simplicity. You won't find any of the new "high-falootan" gadgetry that is standard with today's cars in my 1966 Plus Four. Whereas new cars' operating systems are loaded with different computer chips, I only have an old half-eaten bag of potato chips under my Plus Four's passenger seat somewhere.

As far as I'm concerned, computers are computers and cars are cars - and never the two shall meet. The amount of computer intelligence, or lack thereof, that has gone into cars today is absolutely ridiculous. My daily driver is a 1997 Jaguar XJ6. The other day it began idling too high so I took it to my mechanic to have it fixed. He couldn't because he didn't have the right computer in his small shop to hook up to the computer in my car to reset the idle. When my Morgan idles too high, the mechanic can simply use a screwdriver. So my low-tech mechanic, Dave Gilmour (who is excellent), sent me to a high-tech, high-priced Jaguar dealership to reset the idle. The only problem was that although they had the right computer, the software was incompatible with my car's computer operating system, so I had to come back for another appointment. The only software I have in my Morgan is the tonneau cover.

The next time I have a problem with my Jaguar, I am just going to take it into Future Shop for a repair. When I asked the dealership mechanic whether he thought it was a bit ridiculous that something this simple couldn't be fixed by a quick manual screwdriver adjustment, I think he agreed with me. He jokingly pointed to one of the 2009 model Jags in the showroom and said to me, with a sarcastic grin, "to repair one of those, you just point and click a mouse". (No real animal mouse Morgan joke here, it's just too predictable.)

In my Jag, the radio, seat adjustments, air conditioning, windshield wipers, car diagnostics, idle speed and a million and one other things are all smarter than me. They are all computer controlled and intimidate me. In my Morgan, I am in control.

For all of us who feel only the deepest love and affection for the way computers have enhanced our lives, read on. This is an excerpt from a joke email I received years ago:

At a recent computer expo (COMDEX), Bill Gates reportedly compared the computer industry with the auto industry and stated, "If Car Manufacturers had kept up with technology like the computer industry has, we would all be driving \$25.00 cars that got 1,000 miles to the gallon."

In response to Bill's comments, the auto industry issued a press release stating: If the auto industry had developed technology like Microsoft, we would all be driving cars with the following characteristics.

1. For no reason whatsoever, your car would crash twice a day.
2. Every time they repainted the lines in the road, you would have to buy a new car.
3. Occasionally, your car would die on the freeway for no reason. You would have to pull to the side of the road, close all of the windows, shut off the car, restart it, and reopen the windows before you could continue. For some reason, you would simply accept this.
4. Occasionally, executing a maneuver such as a left turn would cause your car to shut down and refuse to restart, in which case you would have to reinstall the engine.
5. Macintosh! would make a car that was powered by the sun, was reliable, five times as fast and twice as easy to drive -- but would run on only five percent of the roads.
6. The oil, water temperature, and alternator warning lights would all be replaced by a single "This Car Has Performed an Illegal Operation" warning light.

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7. The airbag system would ask "Are you sure?" before deploying.

8. Occasionally, for no reason whatsoever, your car would lock you out and refuse to let you in until you simultaneously lifted the door handle, turned the key and grabbed hold of the radio antenna.

9. Every time a new car was introduced, car buyers would have to learn how to drive all over again because none of the controls would operate in the same manner as the old car.

10. You'd have to press the "Start" button to turn the engine off.

I am sure the new model Morgans have become computerized. But please let's not get too carried away. The only hard drive I want in my Morgan is when I take it for a drive down the unpaved alley behind my house.

Post Script – Any of you that might want to read past Dorg's Morg articles can go to my website www.dorg.ca. So you see it is not that I am anti-computer, in fact I embrace the new world of the internet and everything digital. Just not in cars.

